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News Release

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2004 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM MADE THE MARK

Saint Paul, MN, November 2, 2004—The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) made the mark in 2004 by completing another successful year for Minnesota agricultural producers. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to help landowners install or apply structural, vegetative and management practices called for in a conservation contract.

Minnesota obligated nearly \$24 million in general EQIP financial assistance funds with over 1700 Minnesota agricultural producers. In addition, Minnesota also obligated \$203,000 in EQIP for the Ground and Surface Water Conservation (G&SWC) program. This was the first year G&SWC funds were utilized in Minnesota and are used for existing center pivot irrigation systems from high pressure to low pressure systems, producing a savings in water and energy resources while reducing groundwater contamination potential.

Once again, during FY 2004 allocations in Minnesota were made to Local Work Groups (LWG) and Area Work Groups where local and area resource concerns were prioritized for funding. This has become a very positive planning and implementation process involving producers and many others in the EQIP.

“The EQIP program is a wonderful opportunity for conservation practices to be implemented on Minnesota’s working lands,” says Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist, William Hunt.

NRCS’s mission is to provide leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, improve, and sustain our natural resources and environment. Additional information about NRCS in Minnesota can be obtained by calling NRCS at (651) 602-7900 or by visiting the MN NRCS web site at: <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

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